

The Activity of Federal Office-
holders in Politics

Report of a Special Committee
of the
National Civil Service Reform League

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SUMMARY

of the

Report of a Special Committee of the National Civil Service Reform League on the Activity of Federal Officeholders in Politics.

Reports of undue political activity on the part of federal office holders appearing in the press of the country were gathered together through the aid of an efficient clipping bureau. These were examined and the persons mentioned in them were written to with requests for full information, correction or denial. The replies were carefully inspected and the most important of these cases were followed up by an investigation by an assistant secretary of the League, on the spot. Final drafts of our conclusions were submitted to all office holders and political leaders who were unfavorably involved.

Charges of coercion of office holders by the president to secure the nomination of a particular candidate have been inquired into, but evidence to sustain those charges is wholly lacking. President Roosevelt's appointment lists for a considerable period were, with his permission, examined. From those lists it would appear that presidential appointments prior to the convention were made in the usual manner on the recommendation of senators, congressmen and others claiming the patronage of the offices involved.

President Roosevelt took a decided step in advance toward checking the evils resulting from the activity of office holders in politics by his order of June 3, 1907, amending the civil service rules by forbidding employees in the competitive service from taking part in political management or in political campaigns. This order was enforced in the last campaign.

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The official roll of delegates to the Republican National Convention at Chicago was compared with the latest government Blue Book. It was found that of the delegates to the Chicago convention federal office holders constituted one in ten and of the delegations from the Southern states nearly one in three, and of some Southern states, more than half.

These office holders were political, that is, outside of the jurisdiction of the civil service act, and in most cases their appointment was subject to confirmation by the United States Senate.

The office holders in the South practically control the republican party organization in their respective states and frequently resort to unfair means in order to retain their power.

Their support is a tremendous political asset to any candidate for nomination. As the Southern democratic states have as many votes in the republican national convention as the republican states of equal population, under ordinary circumstances the Southern delegates would control the balance of power in the national convention.

These organizations controlled by office holders are mainly interested in the distribution of the patronage and the naming of delegates to conventions. It is not to the interest of these office holding cliques to elect republican congressman or to bring about party growth and party success, which would mean curtailment or loss of the control of the patronage.

The conditions in regard to the activity of unclassified federal office holders in politics are at their worst in the South, but throughout the country, in accordance with established custom, they are expected to be active in primaries and conventions in the interests of those to whom they owe their appointment and by whose favor they are continued in office. This leads to neglect of official duty and absenteeism on a large scale, and the government is now paying large sums in salaries to officials whose main interest and activity is devoted to politics, while their offices are left in the control of subordinates.

The active participation by persons who have a personal interest at stake in caucuses, primaries, conventions and elections seriously interferes with a free choice of candidates by the people, and in some parts of the country actually prevents it. The federal office-holders number over 300,000, of which number one-third are still outside the civil service rules. These higher officers, wielding wide political influence through their official positions and subject to possible dictation from Washington will, as long as they are permitted to take an active part in politics, constitute a menace to free institutions.

As the most effective and immediate remedies for existing conditions, the Committee urges: (1) the extension by the President of the classified, competitive service to the utmost limit that the law allows; (2) legislation by Congress permitting the classification of the officers whose appointment is now subject to confirmation by the Senate, but who perform purely ministerial functions; (3) a clearer definition and strengthening of the executive order governing political activity in the unclassified service and the vesting of the power to investigate cases arising under this order in the Civil Service Commission or some other body independent of departmental dictation.

[REPORT IN FULL]

Report of a Special Committee of the National Civil Service Reform League on the Activity of Federal Officeholders in Politics.

To the Council of the National Civil Service Reform League:

From the time of President Jackson the holding of a federal office carried with it an implied obligation to help run the party machine. With an occasional protest, this service came to be taken for granted by the public. In federal, state and municipal service it was open, insolent and dominating. President Hayes issued an advisory protest against it which came to nothing. After the adoption of the civil service act in 1883, this activity continued, although in lessening degree among those inferior officials who became relieved from coercion by being brought under the civil service rules. In 1886, in answer to a public demand, President Cleveland issued his well-known order to limit this activity. It was only another advisory protest, and its enforcement rested in himself and in unsympathizing heads of executive departments. In 1902 President Roosevelt declared the Cleveland "order" to be still in force, but made no change as to the manner of enforcement and it remained only a protest. So far, no president believed that he could make a direct rule and enforce it without causing an opposition which would block the wheels of the government to an unwarranted extent.

In 1907 President Roosevelt took it up in earnest and

made a real order. He amended section one of rule I of the civil service rules by adding the following paragraph:

"Persons, who by the provisions of these rules are in the competitive classified service, while retaining the right to vote as they please and to express privately their opinions on all political subjects, shall take no active part in political management or in political campaigns."

The enforcement of this rule was thrown upon the civil service commission, and the commission has performed its duty. The order is an epoch in civil service reform. The competitive classified service now embraces 222,125 places, and the holders of these places are confined to the quiet and efficient performance of their public duties and are completely absolved from the quasi-feudal allegiance which compelled them to devote time on demand, to running primaries and conventions. This is the tremendous victory which civil service reform has won.

The wholesome results of the separation of the competitive service, so great in volume, from politics, furnish the most powerful weapon with which to drive politics out of the unclassified service and to extend the system to state and municipal service. The patronage system cannot stand before the comparison.

The patronage system, and the more emphatically since the recent order of President Roosevelt classifying as competitive the fourth-class postmasters north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi, is now confined to a corner of the service. This corner, however, embraces over 100,000 places, some of them having high salaries attached and filled by men of ability, thoroughly skilled in political manipulation. With few exceptions, they hold their places on the recommendation of some politician, a senator, or a congressman of the dominant party, and in states where the party is not dominant, party committees, and private citizens commonly known as referees, make the recommendations. By whomever recommended, the officeholder feels a duty to his patron, and on demand will work days and nights in his interest. As the higher salaried offices are filled through appointment "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate," they cannot be

classified under the civil service act of 1883 "unless by direction of the Senate."

In the main the federal service seems to be conducted with considerable efficiency, yet this practice violates every business principle. Except in the departments at Washington and a few other places, the larger offices in the unclassified service might be left vacant and the service would be as efficiently performed as now. The average United States marshal, the average postmaster of the larger cities, the average collector of customs, the average surveyor, the average collector of internal revenue, performs comparatively little service for the government. On its business side the employment of these officers is wastefulness and extravagance. The head of a considerable office should be the master mind of that office, thoroughly skilled, devoted to his duties, and his impulse should be felt in every part of the business. As a rule, he knows little of the business. If it were not for the members of the classified service under him, he would be a helpless and useless hulk.

The first object sought by all workers in politics, whether officeholders or not, is the control of the party organization, the precinct and ward men and the county, city and state committees. The work required is in such bad repute that most citizens will not engage in it, and the structure represents the efforts of about 15 per cent. of the party. Primaries and conventions are held upon the call of these committees. With rare exceptions, wherever there is a contest, cut-throat law applies. In any meeting the chairman may, and often does, decide that twenty is a majority over forty, although he is deafened by the vociferating forty. Repeaters, non-residents, insane men and dead men may be voted. The ballot box may be stuffed. A small minority may and do hold another meeting and elect delegates to a convention. At the convention the committee on credentials rarely decides upon the merits. It lets in the set of delegates the majority of the committee wants in the convention. These are well established rules in politics, and every worker in politics understands that he plays the game accordingly.

This is the kind of politics that the unclassified branch

of federal officeholders engage in. This committee has obtained a great bulk of evidence of the application of the above rules in caucuses and conventions for the selection of delegates and the nomination of candidates throughout the country during the past year. It is not claimed that this evidence is in every particular above attack—from the nature of the case it is largely *ex parte* in character—or that it complies with the strict rules of the courts of law; but the committee expressly disavows any intention of making this investigation the ground for prosecutions. Its sole object is to place before the public the facts as they actually exist. The resources at the disposal of the committee have been too limited to make as thorough an investigation as the importance of the subject demands. Such of the evidence as is used in this report, however, is in most cases supported by original documents, or by affidavits secured by a representative of the committee in the localities concerned, and confirmed by inquiries of reputable citizens. Moreover, these data have been submitted to the officeholders named in it, and their replies, where they have deigned to reply, have received most careful consideration. Some of them deny the statements in whole or in part, some offer no explanation, some frankly admit the truth of the charges. Weighing everything, this committee believes that the evidence used fairly represents the conditions as they exist. Nor do the conditions differ materially from former years.

Out of the mass of conflicting statements, this committee is unable to come to any conclusion as to the fairness or unfairness of particular meetings. For instance, in April a county convention was held at Little Rock, Ark., to choose a new county committee and delegates to the state and congressional conventions. Colonel A. S. Fowler and Scipio Jones, a colored man, were nominated for the temporary chairmanship. For two hours pandemonium reigned, and then the chairman decided in favor of Colonel Fowler. Immediately Colonel Fowler took one end of the platform and Scipio Jones the other, and in the course of the next two hours, by the expenditure of an enormous quantity of lung power succeeded in

holding two conventions, providing for two county committees and two sets of delegates.

The participation of federal officeholders was extremely widespread. This participation was not confined to cases involving federal nominations. West Virginia is an instance. Early in the year the following federal officeholders were members of the state central committee:

Elliott Northcott (United States district attorney), Wm. E. Glasscock (internal revenue collector), C. D. Elliott (United States marshal), Sherman Denham (postmaster at Clarksburg), H. I. Shott (postmaster at Bluefield).

The officeholders entered strenuously into the nomination for the governorship, and in addition to the above, Frank Tyree, also United States marshal, and his deputy, as well as the postmasters at Fairmont, Martinsburg and other places were extremely active. In Cabell County in May, where there are 5,200 Republican voters, a mass convention was held to nominate delegates to the state convention. The convention was a mob and resolved itself into two sets of officers and two conventions in the same room, naming two sets of delegates. The state committee seated the machine delegates. We submit the following affidavit of John Bryan, John Sandon, Harry Featherstone, Lewis Herman, Thomas Ritson, John White and Jonathan Brabban, who say:

“That they and each of them are witnesses in certain peonage cases pending in the United States Court for the Southern District of the State of West Virginia, and are now retained as witnesses to appear before the next term of said court in the custody of the officers of said court; that they and each of them are not residents and voters of Cabell County, West Virginia; that they and each of them took part in the Republican convention held at the skating rink in the city of Huntington, Cabell County, West Virginia, on the 5th day of May, 1908, and voted therein for the side of C. W. Swisher, candidate for governor, that they went into said convention and voted therein under the charge and at the instance of

one Sam Davis, a deputy United States marshal of said court; and each of said affiants were paid \$1.00 therefor; that there were twelve of such witnesses so voting."

We also submit the following affidavit:

"William Goodlow being first duly sworn upon oath, says that he attended the Republican mass convention held in the rink in the city of Huntington, county and state aforesaid, on the 5th day of May, 1908, and voted on the east side of said building, and for C. W. Swisher; that the way he came to go to such convention was that one Sam Davis gathered up about one hundred people, some voters and some not, at a room on Third avenue in said city near the Opera House, and that there were two kegs of beer on tap there for all who were present, and plenty of ham sandwiches for all to eat, and a band playing there; that Sam Davis told the crowd there to go up to the rink and vote for Swisher and there would be something in it for each of them, and a little while before the convention met, the crowd that had been so gathered formed a parade and marched around with the band playing in front of it, and after awhile went to the rink, the procession being headed and in charge of Sam Davis and Ed. Lusher, and that they went into the rink and stood on the east side and voted for Swisher as Davis told them to do, and that after the convention was over they all went back down to the Stag Saloon on Third avenue and Mr. Davis paid them off and gave a dollar to some of them and a dollar and a half to some of them, and that there was at least one hundred people so voted and paid by Sam Davis and affiant got \$1."

Both of the affidavits have been attacked on the ground of the character of the men signing them, and the accused official has denied the charge made therein. After a careful inquiry, however, conducted on the spot by our representative, and covering several days during which the manner by which the affidavits were obtained and the opinions of many reputable citizens as to what actually took place were carefully inquired into, he came to the

conclusion that the statements in these affidavits as to what happened at this convention were substantially correct.

In Indiana the Republican organization has been for years controlled by what is known as the Fairbanks machine. The head of the machine all the time has been Joseph B. Kealing, United States District Attorney. In the seven years during which he has held that office, he has devoted much time and effort to building up and strengthening that machine. It covers both state and federal politics. It forced the nomination of the recently defeated candidate for governor. Kealing was a delegate to the last national convention and had charge of the Fairbanks candidacy. A considerable number of federal officeholders in Indiana are opposed to the machine. On one side or the other, in the governorship nomination, nearly every federal officeholder in Indiana in the unclassified service was desperately engaged, and their activity was of the same kind and nature and included the same waste of public time and contained the same element of advantage over private citizens, whose time was not paid for by the government, as in the case of Mr. Kealing.

Affidavits in the hands of the committee represent that a collector of internal revenue in a district in Kentucky has held that office for several years, and during that time he has spent three-fourths of his time away from his office running the politics of the county. That at the primaries in September, 1905, he was working with two deputy collectors and four storekeepers and gaugers. That in August, 1907, there was a primary where a local magistrate was to be nominated, and the collector worked several weeks for his candidate. That two days before the primary he was reinforced by his two deputy collectors and several storekeepers and gaugers, only a part of whom lived in the district. That for several weeks prior to a convention which was to elect delegates to a district convention, the collector and his storekeeper and gaugers and two deputy collectors, were busy calling voters from the street into his private office and inducing them to put on his candidate's badge.

That on the day of the convention there were present as many as thirty-five federal officeholders, all working for the collector's favorite candidate. A deputy collector of internal revenue, a brother-in-law of the collector, was a candidate for chairman, and in his support the collector's followers ran a special train, bringing men from another county who had no right to vote. That owing to vigorous opposition to the collector's candidate the convention resolved itself into two conventions, one held in the street and one in the courthouse, two sets of delegates being chosen. That a few days later the county committee was called together to reorganize, and two storekeepers and gaugers, one deputy United States marshal, and one United States commissioner were present and active. That during the preceding four years the said collector and his deputy collectors and storekeepers and gaugers were nearly always present at the meetings of the county committee and participated by proxy or otherwise. That at nearly every primary election held in the county the collector, with some of his deputies, storekeepers and gaugers had been present and actively working. After making reasonable allowance for overstatement, it seems clear that the first thought of this collector and the federal employees under him is to keep control of the party organization, and nine-tenths of the struggle is for that purpose. This committee is unable to see how this collector can be of any service to the government. One of the deputy collectors, a brother-in-law of the collector, in reply to a letter from our representative admits that he was a candidate for chairman of the convention, and states that he entered the contest because he intended soon after to resign from the revenue service. He further states that he was warned by the collector that his action would be a violation of the civil service rules. But he was not required either to resign or to desist from his activity. The collector himself replied to the effect that such charges as these had often been made against him and that he believes he had answered them satisfactorily to the department. He inferred that such charges were not filed by those who wished to improve the service.

In Tennessee there is an irrepressible conflict between

the Brownlow faction and the Evans faction. For many years Congressman Brownlow was in absolute control, but his power of manipulation weakened and H. Clay Evans led an opposition against him which is now largely in the ascendant. The vital point of the struggle is the ear of the authorities in Washington who make federal appointments; that gained, the battle is won. Every officer in Tennessee in the unclassified service seems to be drawn into the fight, and the contest is a disgrace to the government. The contest this year was entirely for the position of national committeeman. This committee is unable to see how many of the heads of large federal offices of that state, after all the time they give to politics, can render any service to the government. A communication from a reputable citizen states: "You have no idea of the intense feeling that prevails in Tennessee against the political activity of the federal officeholders. It is not based so much on the ground of the activity of the officeholders as it is based on the character of that activity and the lack of character of so many of our federal officials." A similar condition exists in North and South Carolina and in other Southern states. In all of these states the record of meetings is a record of federal officeholders and their domination.

In certain of the Southern states the Republican party has so far had no chance of success. The sole object of the machine in such states is not to build up the party, but to enjoy the distribution and emoluments of the federal offices. The struggle for delegates to conventions is often strenuous in the extreme, but the object is the control of the organization so as to become the agents of office distribution. After the final nominations are made and the new committee appointed, little further interest is shown. The only object is to be sure of succession. In Arkansas for thirty years there has not been the remotest chance of party success. During all this time the party machine and, therefore, the state committee has been dominated and owned by those who controlled the distribution of the patronage.

The Republican organization in Arkansas consists of a state central committee composed of one member from

each county and twenty-one members at large. Out of ninety-eight members of this committee forty-two are federal officeholders. In addition there is an executive committee composed of eighteen members selected from the state committee. Of this committee ten are federal officeholders. F. W. Tucker, Collector of Internal Revenue, is chairman of both committees. The circular issued by chairman Tucker says: "To the executive committee is referred all presidential offices when vacancies occur.

* * * The chairman recommends all minor appointments upon consultation with the state committeemen in the counties where they occur." For more than thirty years this executive committee and General Powell Clayton have controlled both of these committees and the state conventions and the delegations to the national conventions. They have had struggles to meet, but in one way or another they have succeeded in defeating opposition. These struggles always end when continuance of organization control is assured. Their party is in a hopeless minority, and voting at elections is largely a formal matter. If it were not for appearances no state nominations would be made. Some years only a candidate for governor is named. It is charged that there are several instances in the last twenty-five years where congressmen might have been elected, but the machine succeeded in preventing it, for in such cases the distribution of the federal offices would pass out of its hands. In practice the committee names the officers to the state convention, who in turn name the committee on credentials, and the convention thus formed names the next committee.

The official minutes of a meeting of the state central committee of Arkansas, May 30, 1906, are interesting:

The chairman, H. L. Remmel (U. S. marshal), stated that the meeting was one to hear contests and recommend temporary officers to the state convention. The secretary, W. S. Holt (postmaster at Little Rock), stated that there were no contests. Powell Clayton moved that C. N. Ricks be recommended as temporary chairman of the convention, and this was carried. On motion of J. K. Barnes (U. S. district attorney), W. S. Holt (postmaster at Little Rock) was recommended as temporary secre-

tary. U. S. Marshal Remmel stated that he intended to give up the chairmanship. Colonel Whipple (U. S. district attorney) offered a resolution of thanks for Remmel's services, which was adopted after amendment offered by Colonel Brizzolara (postmaster at Fort Smith). On motion of J. K. Barnes (U. S. attorney), the thanks of the committee were extended to the secretary, W. S. Holt (postmaster at Little Rock). The committee discussed the advisability of putting out a full state ticket, but it was decided to recommend to the convention to nominate only a candidate for governor.

The state convention was held the next day and the slate above prepared went through without a jar. The convention was called to order by H. L. Remmel (U. S. marshal). After prayer, Remmel nominated C. N. Ricks for temporary chairman, which was carried. On motion of U. S. Bratton (U. S. assistant district attorney), W. S. Holt (postmaster at Little Rock) was elected temporary secretary. H. L. Remmel (U. S. marshal) nominated for assistant secretaries G. W. Caron (deputy U. S. marshal) and T. A. Tennyson (postmaster at Arkadelphia), and they were chosen. B. J. Rosewater (postmaster at Eureka Springs) moved that a committee of nine on credentials be appointed by the chair, and this was adopted. Three postmasters were placed on this committee. On motion of Colonel Whipple (U. S. district attorney), there being no contest the roll prepared by the secretary was adopted. On motion of B. F. Campbell (postmaster at Fayetteville), a committee of nine on permanent organization was appointed by the chair, Campbell heading the committee. Before the committee could retire, on motion, the temporary organization was made permanent. On motion of A. I. Roland (adopted son of a postmaster), a committee of nine on rules was adopted containing four federal officeholders. On motion of Colonel Whipple (U. S. attorney), a committee of nine on resolutions was appointed by the chair. This committee contained four federal officeholders. On motion of E. H. Vance (postmaster at Malvern), an invitation to visit the new state capitol was accepted. On motion of Charles F. Cole (referee in bankruptcy), the con-

vention took a recess. On reassembling the report of the committee on rules was adopted on motion of A. I. Roland (adopted son of a postmaster). On motion of Powell Clayton, all resolutions were referred to the committee on resolutions. Powell Clayton addressed the convention. Then Colonel Whipple (U. S. attorney) adopted. H. H. Meyers (register, Land Office) nominated reported the resolutions and on his motion they were John H. Worthington (Land Office) for governor. This was seconded by Powell Clayton and R. L. Willaford (postmaster from Manila). There were no other nominations and Worthington was declared nominated. U. S. Bratton (assistant district attorney) moved that nominations be closed and that no other officers be nominated, which was carried. On motion of H. L. Remmel (U. S. marshal), the construction of the state central committee was fixed. On motion of J. F. Mayes (U. S. marshal), a committee of nine was appointed by the chair to select the members of the state central committee at large. On motion of U. S. Bratton (assistant district attorney), it was provided that county vacancies in the state central committee should be filled upon recommendation of the county committee. On motion of H. L. Remmel (U. S. marshal), Henry Hardin was placed on the roll of the state committee. On motion of H. L. Remmel (U. S. marshal), the convention thanked the railroads and newspapers. On motion of J. F. Mayes (U. S. marshal), W. C. Keatts was made permanent sergeant-at-arms of the state committee. On motion of H. L. Remmel (U. S. marshal), the committeemen nominated were to hold for two years. All motions were unanimously adopted, except the motion as to the construction of the state committee which was adopted about 270 against 54.

Substantially the same condition exists in Louisiana, Florida, South Carolina and other states. A further element of the irrepressible conflict for the offices is the Lily White and the Black and Tan war. This committee has what it believes to be reliable information from many parts of the South that there is no true division upon party principles nor will be so long as such a prize as the federal offices is to be fought for. Take away this prize and the

men who believe in certain principles would unite and a wholesome growth would result.

That the condition of the Republican party in the South is well known to the administration is shown by the following from a report of a speech delivered by President Taft at Greensboro, North Carolina, July 9, 1906:

“The question which should address itself to the great business interests of the South is how much longer the spectre of things past is to hold them to an allegiance that does them no good in national politics and deprives their communities of the inestimable benefit of two parties, each of which, if it does wrong, has a real chance of being punished for its misconduct. The possibility of a change of party control for such a cause is the best security of good government.

* * * * *

“The struggle for the federal offices, producing as it does jealousies and strifes and disappointments, paralyzes united effort to make the party strong at the polls and worthy of success. As long as the Republican party in the Southern states shall represent little save a factional chase for federal offices in which business men and men of substance in the community have no desire to enter, we may expect the present political conditions of the South to continue. “There is a little coterie of politicians who devote themselves solely to the selection of delegates to the national conventions, who devote no time and energy whatever to elections and whose whole object is the securing of the federal patronage. The candidates named, if they be named, are not worthy of our suffrage. The truth is the election is a mere formality. * * * In my judgment, the Republican party of North Carolina would be much stronger if all the federal offices were filled by Democrats.”

In the country at large or in a state or district it is of first importance that the opposition as well as the majority should be strong, clean and honest. The effect of the office-holding machine in the South to-day is to retard and

hamper the growth of a sound and strong Republican party, which is the opposition party in the South. The office holders, banded together to control the federal patronage and to wield a power in national conventions, would in fact view with alarm the mere possibility that their state might be carried by their party in a national election, or even the election of Republican congressmen, both of which would mean the loss of control of the offices. From their point of view, even the growth of the party and the infusion of new blood is to be dreaded.

It has been found in this investigation, by means of comparing the official roll of delegates at Chicago with the latest Government Blue Book, that at least one delegate in every ten sent to the National Convention was a federal office holder. Of the 300 delegates from Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Tennessee, Kentucky, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and Georgia, 99—practically one in three—were federal office holders. In the Georgia delegation of 26 there were 12 federal office holders; in the Arkansas delegation of 18 there were 9 federal office holders; in the Florida delegation of 10 there were 7 federal office holders; and in the Alabama delegation of 22 there were 16 federal office holders. With regard, however, to the proportion of office holders in these delegations, it should be kept in mind that practically the entire delegation of every Southern state above named was elected and controlled through the office-holding machine. Allowing for delegates absent or with half votes, 279 were actually cast by the delegates from the 13 states above named. Of these, 2 were cast for Hughes, 5 for Fairbanks, 11 for Foraker, and 261 for Taft. These figures are taken from newspaper reports of the official vote.

The vote of the Southern delegations did not in this case affect the result of the convention. It was well known in advance that Mr. Taft was practically the unanimous choice of the Republican party. Furthermore, this practical unanimity of choice on the part of the Southern delegates was not the result of any dictation or attempt to dictate on the part of the executive. It was partly the

result of the trend of popular sentiment and partly of astute political foresight on the part of the campaign managers. There is nothing novel in this "line-up" of the Southern delegates in a presidential campaign. It has been done frequently before, and there is reason to believe that the managers for several candidates attempted to capture the Southern delegates. Nevertheless, anyone made familiar with these facts cannot fail to see the menace to free elections and popular nominations in this great office-holding machine, controlling under ordinary circumstances the balance of power in a national convention and subject to possible dictation by the president as the chief executive. Not to so use it implies strength of will to resist great temptation.

The history of what occurred in Arkansas will serve as an illustration. Mr. Fairbanks had many friends in the Republican party in the state, and a large proportion of the party favored an uninstructed delegation. In March, 1908, a meeting of the state committee, nearly half of the members of which were office holders, was held and a vote of 70 to 3 was polled against sending an instructed delegation to Chicago. Following this, the leaders of the party, including Mr. Remmel, U. S. marshal of the Eastern District, Mr. Mayes, U. S. Marshal of the Western District, and Mr. Bratton, who was dismissed from the office of assistant U. S. district attorney, but at present is said to be seeking another federal position, were "called to Washington," where they met General Powell Clayton, who has been at the head of the state machine for many years. On their return, they set to work to secure an instructed delegation, and in a state convention held in April, it was voted to send a delegation instructed for Mr. Taft. The contesting delegates were overruled by the state committee, which was in the control of the machine, and the delegates of the Clayton-Remmel machine were the only ones recognized in the state convention, or at Chicago. Illustrations of a similar nature could be drawn from the history of what occurred in Tennessee, Kentucky and Texas.

The illustrations of this report have been taken largely from the South, because by reason of the bitter contests

the facts were more accessible. There is no doubt but that in the North public opinion has driven office holders to keeping their work more under cover. There are many cases, however, like that of Postmaster Greiner, of Buffalo, N. Y., who enjoys the unique distinction of being fair and honest in politics, and who manages entirely the affairs of his party in the city and county. This, of itself, is work enough to occupy any man, and it must fully occupy Mr. Greiner, who, no doubt, feels thankful that his postoffice is manned by thoroughly skilled classified employees. In Albany, the Surveyor of the Port is William Barnes, Jr., the recognized Republican boss of Albany County, and a member of the Republican State Committee. He is proprietor of the Albany "Journal," and the position of surveyor is admitted by his friends to be a sinecure. During the last year he has been notoriously active in opposing Governor Hughes, especially in the matter of race-track legislation, and in the last state convention he led the opposition to the renomination of the governor. The North is full of similar examples of a large degree of absorption in politics, and whenever the interests of the patron of any office holder require it, his work at once becomes open and aggressive. In this connection the following extract from "The Evening Recorder," of Amsterdam, N. Y., regarding the proceedings at a convention held at Saratoga to nominate a Republican congressman is interesting:

"It was a postmasters' convention that met at Saratoga last Friday to name the Republican congressional nominee. Postmaster Liddle, of Amsterdam, presided, Postmaster Davey, of Mechanicsville, was secretary, and Postmaster Durey, of Johnstown, was the nominee. Postmaster Bain, of Canajoharie, seconded the nomination on behalf of Montgomery County, and the convention adjourned on motion of Postmaster Dewey, of Gloversville. The eloquent and able nominating speech was made by a maker of postmasters—Representative Littauer."

We do not criticise the performance of official duties, except the enormous devotion of time paid for by the government to the manipulation of party organizations.

We believe that the last administration made unusual efforts to secure competent men and that it has not blindly accepted the recommendation of congressmen or senators or party committees, but has made diligent efforts to find out the fitness of the men proposed. In the Southern states, owing to the lack of fit nominations by Republicans, many Democrats have been appointed. Malfeasance in office has been rigorously punished. Nor has the participation of office holders in politics been unusual in the past year. It has been the same for two generations. But we insist that this participation is unfair in every respect to all the people and is excessively wasteful and is now the greatest hindrance to the progress of good government in this country.

Nor do we fail to recognize that the best government comes from parties nearly evenly balanced, that party organizations are absolutely essential to conduct campaigns and that campaign expenses must be incurred and paid for. But we insist that principles and not offices should bind men to parties; that a desire to see those principles established should lead to the formation of party organizations and that the necessary money should be contributed from the same desire, all unmixed with a desire to hold office. When a congressman calls out the fourth class postmasters of his district to run primaries and conventions for his renomination, or when a candidate for his place is permitted to use them for the same purpose, or when a senator calls out the marshals, the collectors, the surveyors, the postmasters of the larger offices to do the same work for him in order to control the state legislature, when the party organization in the Southern states pursues the same course in order to perpetuate itself and its members in holding office, all this is not an advocacy of party principles, but is a campaign for selfishness and plunder. It is due to the progressive efficiency of the government and to the welfare of the people that the remaining corner of the federal service should be taken out of this struggle. This can only be done by changing the method by which the administration now selects its appointees. The method of appointing on the recommendation of a senator, or con-

gressman, or a party committee, or a private citizen referee is wholly discredited and is not, and never was, fit for the needs of a great nation. It results in a modified feudalism. Every large office in any department of the service should be within the hope of every employee in that department, to be won by faithfulness, diligence and skill as a public servant. Whenever the president is permitted and empowered to promote to a vacancy in a higher office a member of the same branch of the service who deserves promotion—following the principle of a great railroad in selecting its division superintendents—and requires him to devote his time to his duties, the problem will be nearing solution. Every party then will be required to stand on its own merits and its members to obtain offices by the same rule.

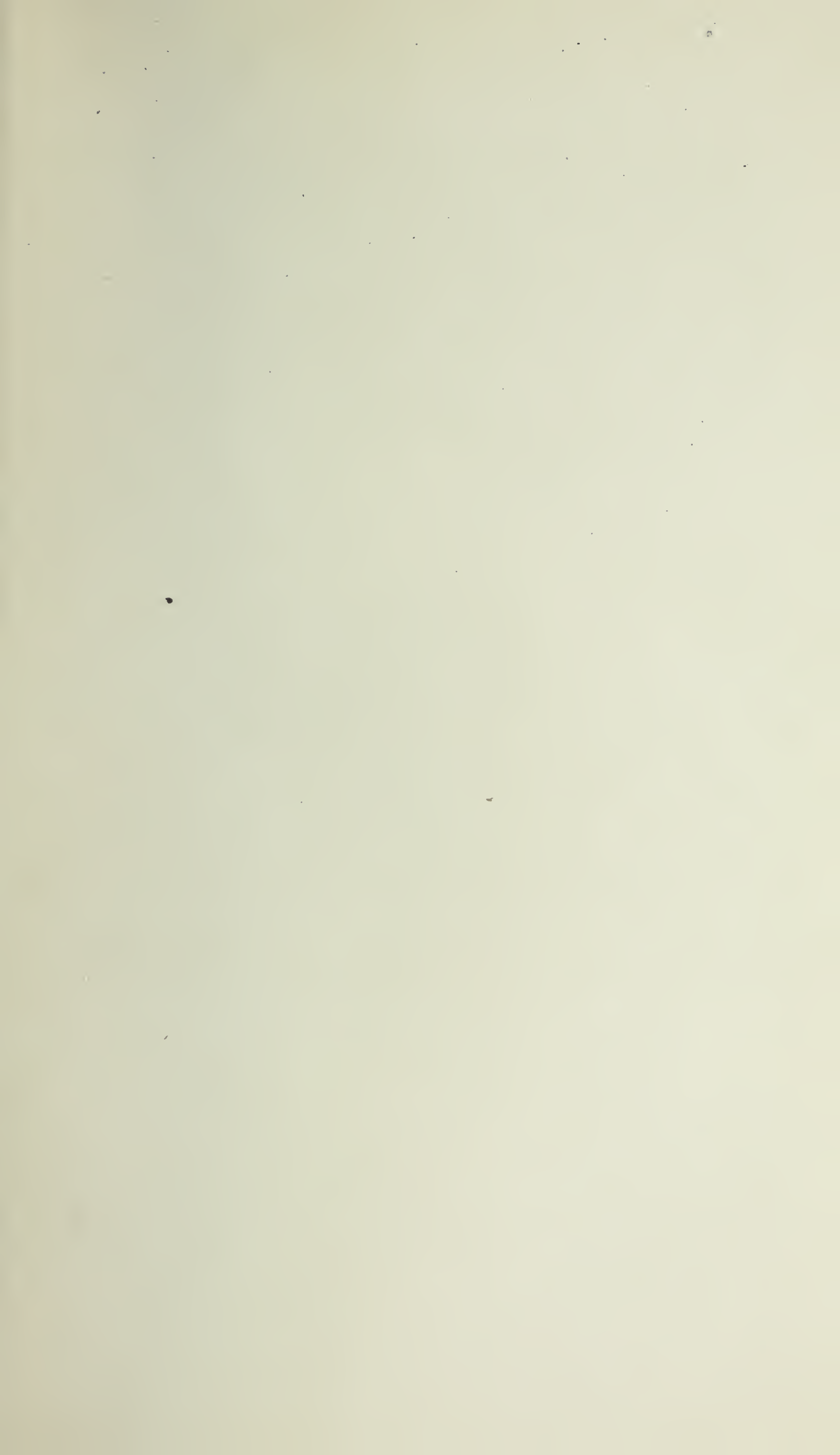
As the most effective and immediate remedies for existing conditions, we urge upon the Executive the desirability of carrying the classified competitive service to the utmost limit that the law allows; second, we urge upon congress legislation permitting the classification of the officers whose appointment is now subject to confirmation by the senate, but who perform purely ministerial functions, such as the higher grade of postmasters and further permitting the promotion and transfer of subordinates to fill higher administrative positions. Finally, having called attention to the benefit which has followed from the amendment to the civil service rules adopted by the President on June 3, 1907, prohibiting political activity in the classified competitive service, we would urge a clearer definition and strengthening of the provision of the executive order governing political activity in the unclassified service, and the vesting of the power to investigate cases arising under this order in the Civil Service Commission or some other body independent of departmental dictation. It is our conviction that public opinion will support and uphold these changes.

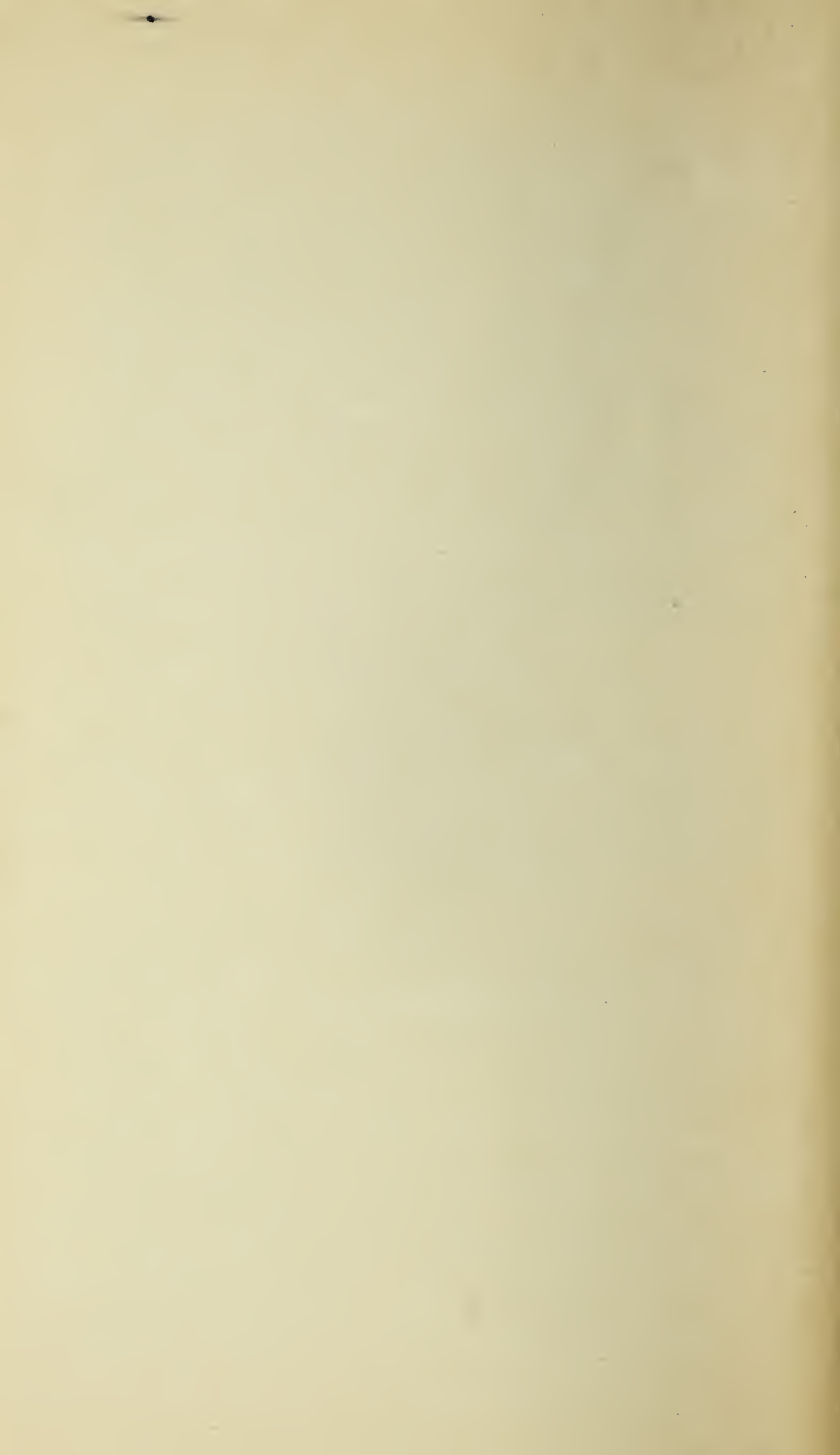
In the heat of the campaign the League was called upon to investigate the alleged use of the patronage by the president to secure the nomination of a particular candidate. This committee is of the opinion that such a charge cannot be sustained and that evidence to support

the newspaper allegations to this effect is utterly lacking. President Roosevelt's appointment lists covering a considerable period prior to election were, with his permission, examined by a member of this committee. From these lists it would appear that presidential appointments prior to the convention were made in the usual manner on the recommendation of senators, representatives and others claiming the patronage of the offices involved. The conditions to which the report calls attention are a product of the spoils system and in the South, of the chaotic political conditions resulting from the Civil War. The growth of the evil is a matter of history covering several decades and the blame for its present threatening proportions cannot justly be charged to any one man or body of men, least of all to that president who has done more than any of his predecessors to limit its scope by additions to the competitive service and by an absolute prohibition against political activity within that service.

Respectfully submitted,

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| SAMUEL H. ORDWAY, | } <i>Special Com- mittee of the National Civil Service Re- form League.</i> |
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| ROBERT D. JENKS, | |
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